

The University of Chicago

GULIAN CROMMELIN VERPLANCK
A FORGOTTEN KNICKERBOCKER

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION
OF THE HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

1934

By
SARA KING HARVEY

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CHAPTER IX
THE TALISMAN

Verplanck found time in the midst of his legislative career to collaborate with William Cullen Bryant and Robert C. Sands upon The Talisman, an annual published successively for the years 1828, 1829, and 1830. Verplanck gives the following account of the annual in his "Memoir of Robert C. Sands":¹

The fashion of decorated literary annuals, which the English and French had borrowed some years before from the Literary Almanacs, so long the favourites of Germany, had reached the United States, and the booksellers in the principal cities were ambitiously vying with each other in the Souvenirs, Tokens, and other beautifully printed and tastefully adorned yearly volumes. Mr. Bliss, a worthy bookseller of New York, and an old especial favourite with Mr. Sands, desirous to try his fortune in the same way, pressed Mr. Sands to undertake the editorship of an annual volume of this sort. This he at first declined; but it happened, that in conversation with two friends, the writer of this memoir and Mr. W.C. Bryant, a regret was expressed that the old fashion of Queen Anne's time of publishing volumes of miscellanies by two or three authors together, had gone out of date. They had the advantage, it was said, over our ordinary magazines, of being more select and distinctive in the characters and subjects, and yet did not impose upon the authors the toil or responsibility of a regular and separate work. In this way Pope and Swift had published their minor pieces, as had other writers of the day, of no small merit and fame. One of the party proposed to publish a little volume of their own miscellanies, in humble imitation of the English wits of the last century. It occurred to Sands to combine this idea with the form and decoration of the annual. The materials of a volume were hastily prepared, amid other occupations of the several authors, without any view to profit, and more for amusement than reputation; the kindness of several artists, with whom Sands was in habits of intimacy, furnished some respectable embellishments, and thus a volume which, with the exception of two short poetical contributions, was wholly written by Mr. Sands and his two friends above named, was published with the title of the Talisman, and under the name and character of an imaginary author, Francis Herbert, Esq. It was favourably received, and on the urgent solicitation of the publisher, a second volume was as hastily prepared in the following year, by the same persons, decorated with engravings very creditable

¹See below, pp. 195-196.

to the state of the arts among us, from spirited designs of Weir and Inman. The third year, the ambition of the publisher soared higher, all the artists of New York were enlisted, double the quantity of literary matter was required, and the industry and ready fertility of Sands were redoubled. The public still gave a favourable reception. But the excitement and amusement it had afforded its authors now flagged, its primitive character of a joint miscellany began to be lost, in consequence of its style of decoration and publication, in that of the mere annual, and Mr. Herbert was suffered to die a natural death, as many better men of the same unreal family had done before him, from the time of Isaac Bickerstaff downwards.¹

Of the editorship, Parke Godwin adds further:

It would be difficult to conceive of editorship under pleasanter circumstances than those in which the "Talisman" was compiled. Mr. Sands resided at Hoboken, where his father's hospitable house was made the headquarters of the trio. It was in the midst of a pleasant hamlet of the most beautiful surroundings. The New Jersey shore of the Hudson River, from the peninsula of Paulus Hook (Jersey City) to beyond Weehawken on the north, presented a singularly picturesque outline of indented coves and wood-fringed promontories, stretching away over level meadow-lands to a bolder background of heights. Wandering through the tangled undergrowth of the woods to the little grassy plot where Hamilton fell in his duel with Burr, and so many other quarrels were voided, or stretching themselves upon the sunny top of a cliff that commanded a magnificent view of river, bay, and city, now belonging to the King estate, the editors would concoct their projects for the annual. Sometimes the members of the Sketch Club would join them in these excursions, and take minutes of the views that were to be afterward engraved.

On returning home they would reduce their wandering talks to manuscript, Sands, as the readiest penman, commonly acted as amanuensis, while the others walked the room or lolled on chairs. How the house would ring, says Miss Sands, surviving sister of Robert, with eloquent declamations and roars of uproarious laughter! Often the passing stranger would stop, thinking rather of jolly fellows at a feast than of sober and sedate scholars in the throes of composition....

.....

Nor were the rambles of the editors confined to the woods; as scholars, they had antiquarian tastes, and often explored together out-of-the-way places in the city itself, where odd characters were to be found, or which were distinguished by historical associations. They gazed, of course, upon the spot in Wall Street where Washington had been inaugurated as the first President of the United States, recalling the forms of Hamilton, Madison, the elder Adams, Jay Knox, Sherman, Lee, Clinton, Ames, Ellsworth, Gouverneur Morris, and others who

¹The Writings of Robert C. Sands (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1834), I, pp. 20-21.

stood around him as he took the oath administered by Chancellor Livingston. They lingered about the fine old homestead at the head of Pearl Street, where he afterward received his friends. Sometimes they paced the shores of the North River, just above the present Barclay Street ferry, where Jonathan Edwards, temporary pastor of the Wall Street Church, used to walk backward and forward while he meditated the mysteries of eternal preordination and freewill, as the eternal murmurs of the ocean fell upon his ears. At other times they sought out the house in Stone Street where the philanthropic Oglethorpe, the founder of Georgia, lodged on his first visit to America; or that on the corner of Broadway looking on the Battery, which had been the headquarters of Wolfe, the conqueror of Canada, and afterward of Howe, who fell at Ticonderoga; or the old two-story structure in Cedar Street, in which Jefferson conversed with Talleyrand and Billaud de Varennes; and they tried to learn the places that Volney and Cobbett, the Abbe Correa and General Moreau, and Tom Moore and Jeffrey had frequented. Of all these sites, no one was more attractive than the massive wooden building, with a lofty portico, supported by Ionic columns, on the hill at the corner of Varick and Charlton Streets, where Lord Amherst had lived, where President Adams entertained foreign ministers and the more conspicuous senators and congressmen, and Aaron Burr resided at the height of his career. All these places, celebrated by the editors in their "Reminiscences of New York," have since been swept away by the remorseless besom of metropolitan progress.¹

Certain facts in regard to The Talisman are notable. It was one of the early annuals in this country, and it ceased publication long before the vogue for annuals had reached its height.² Being largely the product of the collaboration of three men instead of a miscellaneous collection made by some publisher from the works of many writers, it has a unity of content and general tone which is not present in most of the other annuals. The fictitious authorship of Francis Herbert is a unique feature of The Talisman. The public was deceived in regard to him, and were it not that one knew otherwise and that careful reading reveals three distinct personalities behind the contributions to

¹Parke Godwin, Life and Writings of William Cullen Bryant (New York: D. Appleton, 1883) I, 237-41.

²F. W. Faxon, Literary Annuals and Gift Books (Boston: The Boston Book Company, 1912), p. xii. The annual in America was most popular in the years from 1846 to 1852, sixty-three being recorded in 1851, which number is probably not complete - Ibid.

The Talisman, he could almost believe that the three little volumes are the work of one man. The reader is never allowed for a minute to forget that the poems, sketches, and stories all proceed from the journal of Francis Herbert. Passages similar to the following are interspersed all through the three volumes:

I quote from an anonymous jeu d'esprit of my own, written when I was very young. It had great currency in the day of it, but now sleeps undisturbed, as it deserves to do. I quote it only to take this occasion to make the amende honorable to my Albany friends.

F.H.¹

Whether man be portrayed in the grand historical gallery of Walter Scott, the exquisite cabinet of miniatures of Le Sage, or the little rough Album sketches of Francis Herbert, provided we paint likenesses, we are all, in our several ways, "Philosophers teaching by example."²

Then such devices as the continual references to Mr. De Viellecour throughout each of the volumes tend to give a further impression of unity and single authorship.

There was considerable discussion as to the identity of Francis Herbert. The Southern Review, in commenting upon The Talisman for MDCCCXXVIII, did not question the existence of Francis Herbert or his entire authorship of the volume.³ I doubt however, whether the immediate friends of the collaborators were ever deceived as to their participation in The Talisman. Verplanck sent copies of it to his friends, and their letters would indicate that they had even speculated fairly accurately upon his particular contributions. Francis Baylies, in acknowledging a gift of The Talisman for MDCCCXXVIII, said, "I think I know all that belongs to you;"⁴ and E. Bunner wrote:

¹Talisman for MDCCCXXX, note, p. 151.

²Ibid., MDCCCXXIX, p. 151.

³I (1828), p. 262.

⁴Verplanck Papers, (New York Historical Society), Box I, No. B 47.

Since Mr. Herbert wishes to avoid personality I must I suppose not pretend to recognize any personages at Washington but would recommend caution to him in touching his likeness with too true a hand.¹

The following taken from "The Talisman for 1830" by William Cox,² the most intelligent review of any of the three volumes, is typical of the press comment upon Francis Herbert:

We congratulate the public that Mr. Francis Herbert, the notorious traveller, the justly celebrated poet, painter, antiquary, and metaphysician - the bosom friend of the lamented Belzoni, and intimate acquaintance of Baron von Humboldt, and the Abbe du Pradt, has again appeared before them in the tangible form of a third volume of the Talisman. We say tangible form, because, by some strange fatality, Mr. H.'s very existence, except in a certain shape, has again become matter of doubt with the world. Notwithstanding his explicit declaration of last year, the spirit of scepticism is once more abroad; and though his pages afford irrefragable testimony of the existence of a master-spirit, it is roundly asserted that he is not present in the body. Mysterious shakings of the head and knowing winks - significant whispers and mutterings pregnant with more than meets the ear, are passing round the literary coteries of this city, and a volume is actually in the press to prove that Francis Herbert, esquire and gentleman, is not only without "a local habitation," but is, moreover, neither "palpable to feeling or to sight;" and though its design is abominable, as tending to wound the feelings and mar the reputation of a respectable individual, the execution, we understand, is eminently lively and ingenious. There is something passing strange in all this. One would think it would be no difficult matter for a gentleman who is familiar with all the artists, and people of notoriety in the city, to establish his identity; but here lies the mystery. When any of these painters or engravers with whom he professes to have had dealings, are questioned concerning him, they readily answer, "Oh, they all know Mr. Herbert," but when required to be more explicit, there is a sad discrepancy in their statements. First, he is a gentleman of an agreeable rotundity of person, a pleasing eye, and a merry and hilarious physiognomy; then a change comes over the figure; it is decreased in latitude and elongated several inches; the face assumes a younger and graver expression, and a pair of spectacles covers the eyes: anon, it is a man of slim and graceful proportions, with a mild and courteous expression of countenance; and when not present to the eye, these three appear as blended into one individual, and this individual is Mr. Herbert....³

¹Ibid., Box 2.

²William Cox was the printer who set up the manuscript, and his review appeared before the sheets had reached the binder - The Writings of Robert C. Sands, I, 23.

³New York Mirror VII (September 26, 1829), p. 94.

Francis Herbert was the sort of literary affectation that appealed to the Knickerbocker school.

There is no question that The Talisman was outstanding among the host of annuals, the Souvenirs, Tokens, Forget-me-nots, Pearls, Caskets, Garlands, Wreaths, Offerings, and what not, which were published in this country during the second quarter of the century. The North American, in reviewing The Talisman, for 1829, and The Atlantic Souvenir and The Token for the same year, spoke of them as "the three most noted of these little works,"¹ and William Cox designated The Talisman as "the Blackwood of the annuals."² Timothy Flint said of it:

You will see in the present number of the W.M. Review, what I think of the Talisman. I was charmed with it. You will suppose that my desk is lumbered with Annuals, English and American. I dip into some, read a few pages in others, & look over the engravings in others as I have time. I opened this, & was charmed from the commencement to the close. I am afraid, as I have said, of Mr. Herbert when I see him poaching on my grounds of Red River. Neither Mr. Bliss, or any other person had suggested your agency in this work. But the moment I looked at it, I was in no mistake. It is the most interesting annual, I have read, English or American; & is written in a manner too much above the common, to be rightly estimated by a community, whose taste is anything, rather than just & polished.³

Later critics have been inclined to agree with the contemporary estimate of The Talisman. William Cairns said:

The volumes were unpretending in appearance, but the literary quality was high.⁴

C.F. Richardson added that The Talisman "in a modest way marked a period in American literary culture."⁵

This study is concerned especially with Verplanck's contributions to The Talisman, although the annual was so fundamentally

¹XXVIII (1829), p. 480.

²Op. cit.

³Verplanck Papers, Box 4, No. F 28.

⁴Cambridge History of American Literature (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1918), II, p. 174.

⁵C.F. Richardson, American Literature (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1886), II, p. 43.

a work of collaboration on the part of Verplanck, Bryant, and Sands, that it is impossible to make a complete and satisfactory estimate of the contribution of any one of them. Verplanck said of Sands in this connection:

This....was a very favorite mode of authorship with him. He composed with amazing ease and rapidity, and delighting as he always did in the work of composition, it gave him additional pleasure to make it a social enjoyment. He had this peculiarity, that the presence of others, in which most authors find a restraint upon the free course of their thoughts and fancies, was to him a source of inspiration and excitement. This was peculiarly visible in gay or humorous writing. In social composition of this nature, his talent for ludicrous description and character and incident, rioted and revelled, so that it generally became more the business of his coadjutor to chasten and sober his thick-coming fancies, than to furnish any thing like an equal contingent of thought or invention.

This joint-stock authorship, of which Sands was so fond, - not the simple putting together in one whole, parts prepared separately, nor the correcting and enriching by a second hand the rough materials of the first author, but the literally writing in company - was common among the old dramatists, but has few other examples in literary history.... Indeed for the purpose of such association it is necessary that one at least of the authors should possess Sand's unhesitating and rapid fluency of written style, and his singular power of seizing the ideas and images of his friend and assimilating them perfectly with his own.¹

In one of Bryant's letters to Verplanck he wrote:

Inman has a design illustrating Moore's poem of the Dismal Swamp, which I hear spoken highly of, and which he wishes engraved for the 'Talisman.' Will you pick up from the Virginians some particulars of the Dismal Swamp while you are at Washington, which some of us may weave into a narrative, or make a florid description out of.²

This quotation sheds further light upon the method the three employed in working together. The painting of Inman and whatever information Verplanck was able to gain from his Virginia friends finally bore fruit in a descriptive sketch, "The Dismal Swamp," and in the prose narrative, "Drummond, a Tale of the Dismal Swamp," both written by Verplanck and the former serving as a preface to

¹The Writings of Robert C. Sands, pp. 21-22.

²Godwin, op. cit., I, p. 246. The letter was dated May 9, 1828.

the latter.

Verplanck contributed the following to The Talisman:

For MDCCCXXVIII

- * Stanzas. From Poliziana
- De Gourges
- * Stanzas
- * Sonnet on the Shenandoah at Harper's Ferry

For MDCCCXXIX

- Recollections of Balfroosh
- * Shedaud
- * Stanzas
- The Dismal Swamp
- Drummond

For MDCCCXXX

- The Beginning
- * Telemachus Moritis
- Song. When the firmament quivers with daylights young
beam
- Peregrinations of Petrus Mudd
- * To a Child
- Gelyna, a Tale of Ticonderoga

Then Verplanck collaborated with Sands in the writing of "Mr. De Viellecour and His Neighbours" in the volume for 1828, and of "Scenes at Washington," I and II, in the volumes for 1829 and 1830, and with Bryant in the writing of "Reminiscences of New York," I and II, in the same volumes.¹ According to James Grant Wilson, (Memorial History of the City of New York, III, 59) the prefaces were the product of the collaboration of the three.

¹ I have come to my conclusions by eliminating from the selections in The Talisman those which are included in Bryant's published works, those which are included in Sands', and those which critics have designated as being by other writers - these I checked as far as possible in the works of these writers. Naturally the ones remaining would be by Verplanck. Comments of critics upon particular selections by Verplanck have also been helpful. The titles which are starred are poems.

The complete Contents of the three volumes are as follows:

For MDCCCXXVIII

Preface
Preface to an Album

(footnote continued)

They are clever and witty, though of little consequence, being devoted largely to the fabrication of the figure of Francis Herbert and his voluminous journal. The following quotations give a fair idea of them:

Another Preface to an Album - Sands
Adventure in the East Indies - Bryant
A Scene on the Banks of the Hudson - Bryant
Stanzas. From Poliziana - Verplanck
Thoughts on Hand-writing - Sands
Mr. De Viellecour and His Neighbours - Verplanck and Sands
The Hurricane. Written in the West Indies - Bryant
The Serenade - Morse - Samuel Irenaeus Morse, The Life of Samuel F.B. Morse, LL. D. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1875), II, pp. 494-496.
The Butterfly. From the French - Sands
De Gourgues - Verplanck
Isaac; a Type of the Redeemer - Sands
Major Egerton - Verplanck
Sonnet: William Tell - Bryant
The Close of Autumn - Bryant
The Cascade of Melsingah - Bryant
Sonnet on the shenandoah at Harper's Ferry - Verplanck
The Legend of the Devil's Pulpit - Bryant

For MDCCCXXIX

Preface
Recollections of Balfroosh - Verplanck
Shedaud - Verplanck
Recollections of the South of Spain - Bryant
Moriscan Romance - Bryant
The Little Old Man of Coblenz - John Inman - Wilson,
Memorial History, III, p. 59.
To the Past - Bryant
Stanzas - Verplanck
Scenes at Washington - Verplanck and Sands
Red Jacket - Halleck - Wilson, op. cit.
Lament of Romero - Bryant
Sonnet - John Howard Bryant, brother of W.C.B. - Wilson
op. cit.
Story of the Island of Cuba - Bryant
Weehawken - Sands
A Simple Tale - Sands
The Greek Boy - Bryant
The Dismal Swamp - Verplanck
Drummond - Verplanck
Dream of Papantzin - Sands
The Hunter's Serenade - Bryant
Reminiscences of New York - Verplanck and Bryant

For MDCCCXXX

Preface
The Beginning - Verplanck
To the Evening Wind - Bryant (footnote continued)

I have amused myself with getting up this volume with some attention to the forms and ceremonies with which charms and spells are usually compounded in the East. I have copied the contents with a quill plucked from a swan which I caught with my own hands, after a fatiguing chase through the meadows on the banks of the Avon, and the table on which I write is spread with the skin of a royal tiger, which I happened to kill at Madras. The book was printed with virgin types; the type-setters were all born under the planet Mercury; the burines of the engravers have moved under benignant stellar aspects; and my publisher has the most auspicious and fortunate name that can be found in the whole Directory. The paper was sized with strict observation of the planetary hour when Jupiter and Mars were in conjunction in Libra, in the seventh house of heaven, whilst Venus lorded the ascendant, culminating from the very ridge of the planetary house.¹

I detest all quackery, and the examples of great men do not sanctify it in my eyes. The trick of Junius and Walter Scott to attract the public attention to their writings by making their real names a subject of mystery, always disgusted me. I therefore subscribe my name without reserve.²
Francis Herbert

Bryant said that Verplanck wrote about a third of The Talisman³, a statement which seems to be reasonably accurate. The selections in which Verplanck collaborated with either Bryant or Sands and those which he wrote entirely himself comprise some-

The Indian Spring - Bryant
Love and Folly - Bryant
Telemachus Moritis - Verplanck
Ghosts on the Stage - Sands
Chorus in the Persae - Sands
The Whirlwind - Bryant
Song. When the firmament quivers with daylight's young beam - Verplanck
Peregrinations of Petrus Mudd - Verplanck
The Siesta - Bryant
Song. Innocent Child and snow-white Flower - Bryant
Scenes in Washington, No. II - Verplanck and Sands
To the River Arve - Bryant
Association - Sands
The German's Story - Sands
Early Spanish Poetry - Bryant
Eva - Bryant
The Alcayde - Bryant
The Death of Aliator - Bryant
Phanette des Gantelmes - Bryant
The Marriage Blunder - Bryant
To a Child - Verplanck
Gelyna, a tale of Albany and Ticonderoga - Verplanck
To Cole the Painter on his departure for Europe - Bryant
Reminiscences of New York, No. II - Verplanck and Bryant
¹Talisman for MDCCCXXVIII, pp. viii - ix.

²Ibid., pp. ix - x.

³Prose Writings...., p. 413.

what more than half The Talisman; however Bryant wrote more of it alone than Verplanck. Verplanck's part in the publication, though, cannot be estimated entirely by the contributions he wrote himself and those upon which he collaborated. One fancies he sees his influence all through the annual. For instance, Bryant's tale "The Cascade of Melsingah" relates an Indian legend associated with the Cascade of Melsingah on the banks of the Hudson in Dutchess County. Where would he have heard the legend but from Verplanck, who knew the County of Dutchess as he knew the streets of New York?

The selections by Verplanck consist almost entirely of prose, there being only five poems by him in the three editions.¹ There are probably two explanations for this fact: first, he wrote prose with more ease; and second, Bryant and Sands were considered poets rather than writers of prose, although it is true that Bryant contributed a number of prose tales to The Talisman, and Verplanck would naturally leave the writings of the poetry to them.

These poems are slight compositions and justify little comment. "Stanzas. From Poliziana" is a translation of a bit of pastoral verse from the Italian Poliziana. Probably the suggestion for the poem came from Sands, for he was the one of the three who was especially interested in this poet.² "Sonnet on the Shenandoah at Harper's Ferry" describes the river in lines none too smooth and in elaborate but rather trite phrases. "Stanzas" bears quoting, not because it is of superior excellence but because it is "pretty," moral, and sentimental, such a poem as the age and

¹See above, p. 144.

²The Writings of Robert C. Sands, I, p. 16.

the annuals approved:

Upon the mountain's distant head
With trackless snows for ever white,
Where all is still and cold and dead,
Late shines the day's departing light.

But, far below those icy rocks,
The vales in summer bloom arrayed -
Woods full of birds, and fields of flocks,
Are dim with mist and dark with shade.

'Tis thus, from warm and kindly hearts,
And eyes where generous meanings burn.
Earliest the light of life departs,
But lingers with the cold and stern.

"Song. 'When the firmament quivers with daylight's young beam'" is similar - a few stanzas of nature description and a pat moral at the end. "Picture of a Child," like many selections in the annuals, was written for a picture, in this case one used as a frontispiece, an engraving by George W. Hatch from a painting by Henry Inman. The poem in its idea and in its form bears testimony to the artificiality of such an impulse to composition. Clearly Verplanck's gift was for humorous and satirical verse, not for the pretty, sentimental sort which the annuals fostered.¹

His prose in The Talisman is more significant. "De Gourgues" is upon a historical theme, the sort that always appealed strongly to Verplanck. It relates in a simple straightforward style, quite different from that of his more fantastical tales, the story of the gallant expedition of De Gourgues to avenge the fiendish massacre by the Spaniard Don Pedro Menendez de Avilez and his followers of the settlement of French Protestants at La Caroline in Florida. De Gourgues carried out his purpose with

¹I found no references to these poems elsewhere, so I am not entirely confident that I am right in ascribing them all to Verplanck. One or more of them might have been by some friend of one or all the three. Of the prose selections, I feel fairly certain; most of them have been mentioned by others as being by Verplanck.

all the zeal of a fanatic, and his vengeance was no less terrible than the deed it avenged.

"Major Egerton" is a good yarn about an unscrupulous adventurer whom Francis Herbert encountered at various places during his mythical travels. The story is an account of the many and surprising guises in which he appeared. Herbert saw him first among the Tuscaroras, the adopted white son of the Indian orator, Good Peter. There he shamed all the commissioners who had come to make a treaty with the Indians by his officious knowledge of Greek and Latin. In New York, he was a British officer, an important figure in society; at Bath, he was the Mr. Montford who made his debut on the stage as Romeo and was laughed off the stage; at Dover, he appeared as a private soldier doing sentinel duty; at the country seat of Herbert's cousin, not far from London, he was the Episcopal rector, duly attired in surplice and band; his sermon was a paper from the Rambler. Years later Herbert encountered him in Egypt as Hussein Al Rus, the leader of a troop of Mameluke horse, and still much later, in Scutari, as Yussuf the Wise, a Mohammedan priest who was the revered leader of a band of howling Dervishes. Herbert became so obsessed by Major Egerton's various guises that he began to see him in his dreams, and his last appearance there was as a Chinese mandarin. It is the sort of loosely constructed tale that can continue indefinitely.

"Recollections of Balfroosh" is a descriptive sketch which serves as an introduction to "Shedaud," a tale told by Meerza Abd-ool Meer under whose hospitable roof Herbert and a fellow traveller stayed while they were in Balfroosh. "Shedaud" has all the color and the oriental richness of one of the tales from the Arabian Nights. Shedaud reigned in Syria, the monarch of a race gifted with miraculous strength, beauty, and long life. In the

pride of their might, they turned from the true God and worshiped the stars and the elements. Shedaud, as he achieved continually greater power and glory, would not listen to the words of Houd the teacher of wisdom, who told of the "paradise of never-ending felicity" which his Maker reserved to the faithful and obedient. Shedaud boasted to Houd that he would build a paradise which would transcend that of the dreams of the teacher of wisdom. So for many pages is described the palace he had built, one which even dreams could scarcely fancy. "Thus were all the treasures of earth, its wealth, its loveliness, its skill, its genius and taste exhausted in this superb and unrivalled work."¹ As Shedaud with his princes and his household rode forward to take possession, the Angel of Death appeared to claim him and his host, and the palace was never again visible to mortal man, save once in a thousand years.

"The Dismal Swamp" is the "florid description" which Bryant anticipated,² and "Drummond" is a tale of the swamp told to Herbert by Mr. De Viellecour. Pierre Philippe de Viellecour, great-grandfather of the excellent De Viellecour who haunts the pages of The Talisman, was a competent young engineer, sent in the early eighteenth century to aid the royal engineer in making a survey which would fix the boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina. One day while exploring the swamp, Pierre proceeded too far and became separated from his companions. Night fell, and he was unable to retrace his way. While looking for a place where he might build a fire and spend the night, he saw smoke curling up from a rudely constructed hut. He investigated and found it occupied by one who at first seemed a miserable

¹The Talisman for MDCCCXXIX, p. 29.

²See above, p. 143.

maniac and who was terror stricken when the fire he rebuilt to warm his guest revealed the latter's features. Pierre was finally able to calm him and soon learned his story. He was the mysterious Edward Drummond whom his father and mother had often mentioned as one of their friends before they came to America from France. He too had loved Pierre's mother, and in his anger and jealousy had struck down Adrian, Pierre's father, and left him for dead. Years after Drummond came to the solitude of the American swamp to expiate his crime, and there Pierre found him. Pierre's mother had died, but the two old friends were united. It is an interesting story, but it stretches the long arm of coincidence a bit too far.

"The Beginning," a short essay which is the first selection in The Talisman for MCCCCXXX, may be the work of the three editors in collaboration, for it serves, to a certain extent, as a second preface. The vagueness of beginnings is commented upon with many examples:

We know not when madness begins - we know not when sleep begins - we know not when death begins. For ourselves we can neither mark nor record the commencement of either state; and our friends cannot do it for us. Yet our sane and waking existence has each its definite point of termination; and so hath our being upon earth.¹

So is the beginning of a book vague; the author has a general idea of the form he wishes it to assume, but he has little conception of the final product which will evolve. But - and here comes a moral which might well have been the guiding star of the literature of the twenties and thirties:

....we have it in our power to prevent the intrusion of impurity, reject the instigations of malice, and avoid the appearance of evil; and though we may be neither wise nor brilliant, take care to write nothing which the truly virtuous must condemn.²

"Telemachus Moritis" is the story of an idealized Greek, a student in Paris, who later returned to Greece and distinguished himself in her struggle for freedom, in which he finally fell. "The Peregrinations of Petrus Mudd" is a humorous tale of "an odd looking, sallow, sun-burnt, meagre man"¹ who traveled everywhere and saw nothing, who had the most unusual and fascinating experiences but was completely untouched by them. After his return to his own country, he set himself to study geography that he might learn something about the places where he had been. "Gelyna, A Tale of Albany and Ticonderoga" is marked by all the sentimentalism of the period. Gelyna "wept over the woes of stainless Clarissa Harlowe, sympathized with the persecutions of the prim Pamela, and made a third with Clementina and her rival in sighing for the peerless Grandison."² Her lover fell at Ticonderoga; she refused to believe the reports of his death and watched and waited for his return all the rest of her life, finally becoming somewhat deranged. In writing such a story Verplanck was frankly catering to popular taste, but I am not sure that he did not meanwhile have his tongue in his cheek.

The selections written in collaboration are some of the happiest contributions to The Talisman. The personalities of both Sands and Verplanck add charm to "Mr. De Viellecour and His Neighbours." The burlesque and comedy are Sands'; the creation of the character of De Viellecour, the kindly observations on life, and the more or less historical setting are Verplanck's. De Viellecour was very proud of his handwriting. Some extra flourishes which he added to a letter of thanks written to a spinster were interpreted as a proposal of marriage, and all sorts

¹P. 88.

²P. 309.

of complications resulted. The kindly De Viellecour finally took refuge in flight.

"Scenes at Washington," I and II, is a satire on official life, fashions, manners, and politics at Washington, such as Mark Twain attempted in portions of The Gilded Age and so many writers since Verplanck have done. In the scenes portrayed we see a curious medley: the Washington boarding house and the figures gathered there, six-hour speeches in Congress on such questions as the paving of Tennessee Avenue, Congressmen interested in everything but their duties, the selling of bogus stock - in the Dismal Swamp, for instance - male and female fortune hunters by way of marriage, the products of the finishing school, false learning, bad French, unpaid bills, poverty under the mask of opulence, dishonesty, everyone pretending to be what he is not. The modern satire on Washington, one observes, has not found much new material in more than a hundred years.

"Reminiscences of New York," I and II, is delightful. It is the sort of sketch in which Verplanck was at his best. It is unfortunate that he did not write one of the many books on New York which were published in the forties and fifties, for his "Reminiscences" reveals more of old New York and of New York in the early nineteenth century than any of them. A quotation is more illuminating than much explanation:

I have said that New York is full of reminiscences. Some are consecrated by religious feeling, and some by their connection with the political destinies of our country. My father used to show me, when a boy, the spot on the North River, just above the present Barclay-street Ferry, where Jonathan Edwards, when temporary pastor of Wall-street church, used to walk backwards and forwards on the solitary pebble shore, sounding the depths of his conscience, and drawing "sweet consolation" from the religion which he taught.... Then likewise he showed me the little church, back of the site of the present Methodist Chapel, in John-street, where Whitfield, as my father expressed it, used "to preach like a lion," with a searching power that made the sinner quail, and shook and broke the infidel's stony heart. It was in Wall-

street that the apostolic Tennant lifted up his melodious voice, and sounded the silver trumpet of the gospel....At the corner of Broadway, in a house looking upon the Battery, were for a while the head-quarters of Wolfe, the conqueror of Canada, and afterwards those of that Lord Howe, who fell at Ticonderoga in the year 1756, and who, but for his untimely fate, might have been to England another Marlborough.

To come down to later times. On the site of the present Custom House, where the commerce of the world pays its tribute to the great treasury of the nation, stood the old City Hall, commanding a view of the wide and winding avenue of Broad-street. Here, in a species of balcony, in the second story of the building, such as the Italians call a loggia, mean in its materials of wood and brick, but splendid in the taste and proportions given to it by the architect L'Enfant, the inauguration oath of the chief magistracy of the Union was administered by Chancellor Livingston, to Washington, the first of our Presidents.... Behind the President stood a group of the illustrious fathers of the nation, Hamilton and Knox, and the elder Adams, and the venerable and learned and eloquent Johnson¹ and Ellsworth and Sherman of Connecticut, and Clinton and Chief Justice Morris and Duane of New York, and Boudinot of New Jersey, and Rutledge of South Carolina, and less conspicuous in person, though among the foremost in fame, the Virginian Madison....²

Of the foregoing selections in The Talisman, Mary Russell Mitford included in her Stories of American Life³ "Mr. De Viellecour and His Neighbours" in Volume I, "Scenes at Washington" in Volume II, and "Peregrinations of Petrus Mudd" and "Reminiscences of New York" in Volume III; and in her Lights and Shadows of American Life,⁴ "Major Egerton" in Volume II.

As one reads a second time Verplanck's prose sketches and tales in The Talisman, he realizes that they are better than he at first thought. They are long drawn out, to be sure, and loosely connected. They have little real plot interest. Verplanck had none of that conception of oneness of plot, of subordinating every element of the story to one central purpose, which enabled

¹Verplanck's grandfather.

²The Talisman for MDCCCXXIX, pp. 312-314.

³(London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1830).

⁴(London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1832).

Hawthorne and Poe in the next decade to evolve the short story. His stories include at times a rather tiresome amount of detail and much extraneous material. His long introductions are a bit wearing. The continual references to Francis Herbert, although they are not peculiar to Verplanck, often make the framework of The Talisman too obvious. Verplanck's tales and sketches do, however, evidence a great deal of variety. They include the historical sketch, the humorous tale of character and of incident, the satire of contemporary conditions, the romantic tale set in an unusual and little known environment, the tale of heroism, the elaborate tale of the Orient, and the story of love and adventure. One finds the annuals and the magazines of the period full of these various types. They manifest no great literary excellence, but they are representative of the literary interests of the place and the time. Aside from the work of Irving, Cooper, and Bryant, the first third of the nineteenth century produced little genuine literature - perhaps the age was too busy with other interests. That fact explains, at least in part, a contemporary fame of figures whose work is now in many cases entirely forgotten. Verplanck's stories, furthermore, are full of the atmosphere of the time. There are continual references to contemporary figures. The comments upon the engravings and their artists reconstruct the whole background of the Sketch Club.¹ Verplanck takes us back into the pleasant town life of the New York of the twenties. His style, reminiscent of Irving and of the essayists of the eighteenth century, is pleasant, and his wise observations upon life often add depth to somewhat frivolous sketches.

Dana's comment, though not extravagant in its praise, is altogether just:

¹See above, pp. 45-50 (of the complete dissertation, which is to be found only in the University of Chicago Libraries).

If the public will have their literature set off with such finery and daintiness, it is well for them that you & Bryant & friends are willing to furnish a portion of the matter. For my own part, if I knew that what I was writing was to go into a Souvenir, I should feel all the while I was at work, as if I could never write fine enough. You do not seem to have been in this uneasy state; for your stories have a perfectly free manner with them; & you joke in the superfine broadcloth quite as much at your ease as I should in homespun.¹

In 1833 the three volumes of The Talisman were reissued by Elam Bliss as Miscellanies, with no changes or revision except the addition of a new title-page, on which the names of the authors appeared. It read, in part, "Miscellanies, First Published under the Name of the Talisman. By G.C. Verplanck, W.C. Bryant, and Robert C. Sands."

¹Verplanck Papers, Box 3, No. D 33. The letter was dated July 22, 1829.

CHAPTER XI

A CONTRIBUTOR TO PERIODICAL LITERATURE

Verplanck, like all of his contemporaries, contributed to the magazines and newspapers. His connection with the Corrector and the New York American and his early articles in the Analectic I have already discussed.¹ In 1813 he contributed to the Churchman's Magazine a short biography of his great-grandfather, Dr. Samuel Johnson,² the facts for which he gained largely from T. B. Chandler's Life.³ The following note precedes the sketch:

The following interesting biographical memoir was published in substance in the "American Medical and Philosophical Register." It appears in the Churchman's Magazine, with some alterations and additions by the author.⁴

The biography is written in the rather colorless style and manner of the early biographical articles in the Analectic, and is of no particular significance. Reverend William Berrian included it in his An Historical Sketch of Trinity Church, prefacing it with the comment:

The following sketch of the life and character of the Rev. Dr. Johnson, is from the classic pen of his great-grandson, the Hon. Gulian C. Verplanck. It is drawn from a fuller biographical memoir of this distinguished man, which appeared in the Churchman's Magazine for 1813.⁵

¹See above, Chapter VI (of the complete dissertation).

²I (1813), p. 5.

³The Life of Samuel Johnson, D.D. (New York, T. and J. Swords, 1805).

⁴I (1813), p. 5.

⁵P. 108.

Verplanck continued his connection with the Analectic Magazine after 1814. Apparently he was more than just a contributor, for November 18, 1815, he wrote from Philadelphia to J. Bacon, York, Pennsylvania:

Having been absent from New York for several weeks, I but yesterday received the communication with which you have favoured me for the Analectic Magazine. I am now on the point of sailing for Charleston, where, or in some other part of the Carolinas, I shall probably spend the winter. I have handed your communications to the gentleman who has undertaken the superintendence of the Magazine, who will I presume give them a place - but not (I should think) in the December number which is I believe almost all printed. I shall have no other concern in the Analectic for some months than an occasional communication. It is, however, in pretty good hands, and I feel no desire for its fate.¹

The following letter from Robert Walsh, written from Philadelphia, July 2, 1818, would suggest that in later years Verplanck contributed little to the Analectic:

You are most amply endowed with "grace," but this is not enough for the world, & those who are interested in the Analectic Magazine. You must persevere in "good works" and we would not allow you to intermit them even during the hot season - I have repeatedly inquired of Mr. Thomas when he is to receive an article from you, who have already enriched him so much, & by whom he expects to thrive hereafter in his Journal: But he can give no satisfactory answer, & I grow² impatient at the inaction of my colleagues in New York....

In July, 1819, however, he wrote for it a brief review of the Sketch Book, which Mott says was one of the most interesting reviews the magazine contained.³ Of little more than a page, the review is of no particular significance, aside from the fact that it is wholly favorable and makes some excellent critical comments. He begins as follows:

We believe that the public law of literature has entirely exempted periodical publications from the jurisdiction of the

¹Letter found at the New York Historical Society, not among the Verplanck Papers.

²Verplanck Papers, Box 8, No. W 16.

³Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1875), p. 282.

ordinary critical tribunals; and we therefore notice the first number of this work, without any intention of formal criticism, but simply for the purpose of announcing its appearance, and of congratulating the American public that one of their choicest favourites has, after a long interval, again resumed the pen. It will be needless to inform any who have read the book, that it is from the pen of Mr. Irving. His rich, and sometimes extravagant humour, his gay and graceful fancy, his peculiar choice and felicity of original expression, as well as the pure and fine moral feeling which imperceptibly pervades every thought and image, without being anywhere ostentatious or dogmatic, betray the author in every page; even without the aid of those minor peculiarities of style, taste, and local allusions, which at once identify the travelled Geoffrey Crayon with the venerable Knickerbocker.¹

Then Verplanck gives the plan of the work and makes brief comments on each separate sketch. Of "Rip Van Winkle" he says:

The last article is 'Rip Van Winkle,' 'a tale found among the papers of the late Diedrich Knickerbocker,' in which the writer seems to have aspired to unite the Dutch painting of Crabbe and Smollett with the wild frolic and fancy of an Arabian tale.²

"View of Washington's Headquarters", published in the Mirror, December 27, 1834, is a description of the old Hasbrook-house, Washington's headquarters at Newburgh, New York, and of the events which transpired there during the Revolutionary War. Verplanck makes the most of the humble building as a strange setting for events of such tremendous significance. He loved the home of his ancestors, and he was never happier than when writing of the picturesque Hudson, the mountains on either side, Newburgh, Fishkill Village, Fishkill Landing, and the surrounding country. Washington is the central figure in the description, his dignity, his patriotism, the devotion he inspired in his soldiers, and his ability to meet every emergency with wisdom and courage. The episode of the Newburgh letters brings out in the General all that is splendid.

¹Analectic Magazine XIV (July, 1819), p. 78.

²Ibid.

A bit of the sketch illustrates its pleasant personal style:

Those who have had the good fortune to enjoy the acquaintance of officers of the northern division of our old army, have heard many a revolutionary anecdote, the scene of which was laid in the old square room at Newburgh, "with its seven doors and one window." In it were every day served up, to as many guests as the table and chairs could accommodate, a dinner and supper, as plentiful as the country could supply, and as good as they could be made by the continental cooks, whose deficiency in culinary skill drew forth in one of his private letters (since printed) the only piece of literary pleasantry, it is believed, in which the great man was ever tempted to indulge. But then, as we have heard old soldiers affirm with great emphasis, there was always plenty of good wine. French wines for our French allies, and those who had acquired or who affected their tastes, and sound Madeira for the Americans of the old school, circulated briskly, and were taken in little silver mugs or goblets made in France for the general's camp equipage. They were accompanied by the famous apples of the Hudson, the Spitzenbergh and other varieties, and invariably by heaped plates of hickory nuts, the amazing consumption of which, by the general and his staff, was the theme of boundless admiration to the Marquis de Chastelleux and other French officers. The jest, the argument, the song and the story circulated as briskly as the wine; while the chief, at the head of his table, sat long, listened to all, or appeared to listen, smiled at and enjoyed all, but all gravely, without partaking much in the conversation or at all contributing to the laugh, either by swelling its chorus, or furnishing the occasion; for he was neither a joker nor a story-teller. He had no talent, and he knew he had none, for humour, repartee or amusing anecdote; and if he had possessed it, he was too wise to have indulged in it in the position in which he was placed.¹

Verplanck wrote the letter-press in the Mirror of March 28, 1835, which accompanied an engraving by Smillie from a painting by Weir, An Autumnal Evening. Verplanck quoted at the head of his article Bryant's "To a Waterfowl." He described the scene on the Hudson near West Point which Weir had painted, as he saw it one autumn evening, and then went on to show how Weir in his painting and Bryant in his poem had each expressed the same emotion.

¹New York Mirror XII (December 27, 1834), p. 201. This was the letter-press for an engraving of the Hasbrook-house by Smillie, from a painting by Verplanck's friend, Robert Weir.

He said:

Thus it was, that when Weir had finished his picture, he found that he had but copied from nature what had been copied before with equal fidelity and power, with the same feeling, the same pure and simple severity of taste, the same harmonious union of perfect truth of detail with imaginative ideality of expression and effect. In short, he had embodied on his canvas the thought, the sentiment, the pensive depth, yet tranquillity of feeling that Bryant had before clothed in the simplest, but the most poetical of language.¹

Most of the article is devoted to a discussion of Bryant's poetry. He felt that Bryant had not received the praise in this country which he deserved, that he should be ranked not with the minor poets of England, but very far above them with Thomson, Gray, Goldsmith, and Campbell. He would wish, however, that sometimes Bryant would "call in the interest of character, incident, and story, in aid of the charms of description, reflection, and sentiment."²

His estimate of Bryant is too high, but his comments on his poems are sane and intelligent; they evidence real appreciation of the beauties of his poetry.

In April and July, 1857, Verplanck contributed to the Crayon in "Notes and Queries" long critical articles explaining disputed passages from Virgil's Aeneid.³ In the first he considered I : v. 607-610:

In freta dum fluvii current, dum montibus umbrae
Lustrabunt convexa, polus dum sidera pascet
Semper honos, nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt.

He devoted his discussion to the phrase, dum montibus umbrae lustrabunt convexa. One might wonder what was the occasion for his interest in the passage. He said:

¹Ibid., (March 28, 1835.)

²Ibid.

³Crayon IV (1857), pp. 113, 213. These articles are signed "V".

The question rose thus: some weeks ago, a bright school-boy consulted me as to the proper and precise translation of these words. I answered without hesitation that it was this, "As long as shadows move around the prominences of the mountains," meaning by convexa both the summits and the projections of mountains. I referred him at the same time, as a practical exemplification of the poet's sense, to the mountains of Dutchess Co., then in full view, where with the sun's varying position the deep shadows fell in different directions, from early morning to sunset. But he told me, to my surprise, that this did not seem to be the meaning given in the notes to the Virgil he used at school. The conversation taking place in a library pretty well stocked with classical and political literature, I turned to the commentators at once....¹

I quote his explanation because it illustrates how slight a suggestion could stimulate his pen and also because it is so characteristic of Verplanck himself.

He recounted the long list of authorities which he consulted to determine whether the passage meant the shadows of the trees or, as he told the schoolboy, the shadows of the mountains themselves. Although he found the commentators and translators against him, he was unconvinced. He concluded by saying:

But I submit the question to the judgment of your readers, whether scholars or artists, or, what I am glad to say, is no uncommon union in this country, to those entitled to judge in both capacities.²

The second article he began as follows:

When some four months ago I made use of your columns to obtain a solution of a question of Virgilian criticism (on Aen. I. v. 607-610), in which the authority of Nature had led me to question that of translators and commentators, I had little expectation of calling to such a subject the attention of any beyond, here and there, some solitary scholar or artist - certainly, I had no hope of calling forth so wide an interest, and so much scholarship and good taste as have been manifested on the question then propounded. Since this question was thus presented I have known it to be discussed in club-rooms, in artists' studios, in bank parlors, where millions are wielded, and by eminent counsel, in the recess of an argument on an appeal case, involving the disposition of millions.

¹ Ibid., p. 113.

² Ibid.

Besides the articles in other journals, the classic columns of the New York Evening Post produced, evening after evening, a variety of discussions of the point, often differing from my own view of the question, but all evincing taste and reading. One of the results which most gratified me was, that my question called forth from Bryant (besides a brief, but excellent prose criticism) four lines of verse, giving the only perfectly faithful translation of the lines under discussion, to be found in our language; for I believe no other metrical translation gives the precise idea of the poet, in his "Polus dum sidera pascet".... a phrase borrowed, like many other of Virgil's refined elegances of expression, from the Greek -

While Heaven leads forth at night, and folds again
His starry flock; while rivers seek the main,
While mountain heights a moving shadow cast, 1
Thy honor, name, and praise shall ever last. 1

Nothing could have pleased Verplanck more than to have been the instigator of so "refined" and "scholarly" a controversy.

Then he stated his problem: the exact meaning which Virgil intended in the expression inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos (IV Georgics v. 419; Aeneid I. 161). He had been taught, and the translators and editors agreed, that the words meant: "The sea, broken on the rocky entrance, divides itself, and thus enters into the far retired bays of the harbor." As he read Virgil more carefully later, he came to feel that this translation of the words sinus did not express the meaning with which Virgil used the word elsewhere when connected with fluctus, unda, or pontus; then he used it to mean the hollow or curve of the wave. Verplanck summoned an elaborate array of authorities on both sides of the question, going after he had exhausted those in his own library to the Astor library and seeking also the aid of Dr. Cogswell. He did not settle the question, however; he said:

Still, after all, the true sense of the text may be best studied on our own Atlantic shores - on the rocks of Newport, for example - with occasional reference to the authority of an old pilot, or fisherman, or some other veteran web-footed man of the sea.²

¹Ibid., (July, 1857), p. 213. See also Crayon IV (May, 1857), p. 153, where Bryant comments upon Verplanck's earlier communication and gives his own metrical translation, herein quoted.

²Ibid.

A number of Verplanck's contributions to magazines were first published elsewhere, and some were papers or addresses which he had read or delivered upon various occasions. The Mercantile Address was published in the New York Mirror of December 3, 1831.¹ The Memoir of Sands included in Verplanck and Bryant's edition of their friend's works was published in the Mirror of February 8, 1834.² "Bourbon's Last March," written for Goodrich's Token for 1835, was published in the Mirror for October 11, 1834.³ Garrick: His Portrait in New York, Its Artist and History, which he read before the Sketch Club, January 9, 1857, was published in the Crayon for April, 1857.⁴ The Virgil papers in the Crayon were published also in the New York Evening Post.⁵

I am fairly sure that I have not found all of Verplanck's contributions to periodicals. The practice in the magazines of the twenties, thirties, and forties of printing unsigned articles and stories and the difficulty of locating many of the shortest-lived periodicals make almost impossible the identification of all the works of a particular writer. Verplanck was in the habit of writing open letters to newspapers and magazines and answers to queries appearing in the periodicals,⁶ and it would be almost impossible to identify all such contributions. There are among the Verplanck Papers a number of letters from editors of magazines,

¹IX, p. 169.

²XI, p. 249.

³XII, p. 113.

⁴IV, p. 65.

⁵William Cullen Bryant, Prose Writings of William Cullen Bryant (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1884), p. 425.

⁶In Crayon IV is a reply in "Notes and Queries," explaining the word, vendue.

asking Verplanck to contribute, and he probably in some cases complied. I doubt, however, whether he contributed to magazines many articles and stories which I have not found. The Verplanck Papers supplied a rather adequate check on Verplanck's activities, and I found among them no direct references to contributions to magazines which I have been unable to find. For this reason, I am inclined to question the statements of Allibone and the Cambridge History of American Literature¹ that he wrote for the North American Review.

It seems rather a significant fact that Verplanck was not one of the contributors to The Knickerbocker Gallery.² As one reads the magazines of the forties and fifties, he seldom comes across a contribution from Verplanck, and even in the thirties, he wrote much less for the magazines than most of his contemporaries, as, for instance, Bryant, Irving, Hoffman, Dunlap, Sigourney, and Embury.

¹II, p. 164.

²(New York: S. Hueston, 1855).

CHAPTER XII

MISCELLANEOUS LITERARY WORKS

Verplanck wrote a number of miscellaneous prose works, their subject-matter being determined usually not by some fundamental interest but by an occasion, a question of a friend, a painting, or some other rather superficial circumstance.

Somewhat in the manner of his political squibs is the Procés Verbal of the Ceremony of Installation...., a satire giving the order of ceremonies for the inauguration of Dr. Hosack as President of the New York Historical Society, February 8, 1820. It was published anonymously, but Allibone said that it was attributed to Verplanck,¹ and it is generally conceded to have been written by him.

The following quotation indicates the style and content of the Procés Verbal:

Then Dr. Graham shall make an excellent English speech, in honour of Governor Clinton and the President-elect; after which, Dr. Busby shall make a Greek speech, in honour of Governor Clinton and the President-elect; after which Mr. Daponte shall make an Italian speech, in honour of Governor Clinton and the President-elect; after which Mr. Bonner shall make a French speech, in honour of Governor Clinton and the President-elect; after which, Mr. Verplanck shall make a Dutch speech, in honour of Governor Clinton and the President-elect; after which Mr. Gahn shall make a Swedish speech, in honour of Governor Clinton and the President-elect; after which Dr. McNeven shall make an Irish speech, in honour of Governor Clinton and the President-elect; after which Mr. A. H. Palmer shall make a Chinese speech in honour of Governor Clinton and the President-elect; after which Major Noah shall make a Hebrew speech in honour of Governor Clinton and the President-elect.

¹A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1890.

These being concluded, The Diplomas of membership of all the learned Societies to which the President-elect has been associated shall be drawn into the room in the triumphal car, built under the direction of Stephen Price, Esq., for the triumphal entry of Alexander the Great into Babylon, on the New-York Theatre. The diplomas shall all be read aloud by Drs. Busby and Graham, at the conclusion of each of which the President-elect shall rise, and bowing gracefully unto the Society, shall chaunt, clarâ voce,

Verum est, et non est Hum
Quare dico, dignus sum,
Vester Praeses, for to be
In this wise Society.

To which the members shall chaunt in reply,

Dignus, dignus, dignus es,¹
For to be our new Praeses.¹

Verplanck never wrote in this vein again, a fact which is perhaps to be regretted.

In 1834 he and Bryant edited in two volumes the works of Robert C. Sands, their collaborator in the authorship of The Talisman.² Sands died December 17, 1832, at the age of thirty three.³

Their editorial task consisted of arranging Sands' works, of supplying some original notes as well as explanatory introductions to a portion of them, and of writing a Memoir of Robert C. Sands, wholly the work of Verplanck,⁴ which preceded the selections in the first volume. The Memoir was a work done con amore, to use Verplanck's own expression for he was devoted to the younger man, and he had the greatest admiration for his genius.

The edition is well planned. The longer works, such as Historical Notice of Herman Cortes, Conqueror of Mexico, and

¹(New York: Printed for the Use of the Members, 1820), pp. 5-7.

²The Writings of Robert C. Sands in Prose and Verse (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1834).

³Ibid., pp. 25-26.

⁴New York Mirror XI (February 8, 1834), p. 249.

Isaac: a Type of the Redeemer, are included in the first volume, while the shorter selections of a more miscellaneous nature are collected in the second. The information given in the notes and introductions to some of the selections sheds valuable light upon the literary life of the time. Being so closely associated with Sands, Verplanck and Bryant naturally knew details concerning the first publication of his various works - he contributed to many of the short-lived periodicals of New York - which it would be difficult for a stranger to find out.

The Memoir is rather short, consisting of only thirty pages. It relates briefly the facts of Sands' life, laying special emphasis upon his education, his accomplishments in the classical and modern languages, his friendship with James Eastburn, his fondness for writing in collaboration, the periodicals with which he was connected, his writings, his death, and finally, his character and personality.

Verplanck's account of Sands' death bears quoting:

His last finished composition was a little poem entitled "The Dead of 1832", which appeared anonymously in the paper he was connected with, a few days only before his own death. By one of those strange coincidences that so often occur to perplex human reason with suggestions which our philosophy can neither admit nor refute, he selected for his subject the triumphs of Death and Time over the illustrious men who had been gathered to their graves in the year then just ending - Goethe, and Cuvier, and Spursheim, and Walter Scott; Champollion, who read the mystic lore of the Pharaohs; Crabbe, the poet of poverty; Bentham, the philosopher of legislation; Adam Clarke, the meek and learned hierarch of Methodism; the young Napoleon, "the heir of glory;" and Charles Carroll, the long-lived survivor of

- The brave who perilled all
To make an infant empire free;

a crowd of the wise and great, whom he who thus mourned them was himself destined to join within the few remaining days of the same year.

Mr. Sands, just before his death, had engaged to furnish an article on Esquimaux Literature, for the first number of the Knickerbocker Magazine, then just established by a literary friend. He had consulted, for this purpose, all the common

books containing any thing which related to that singular race of people.... He had already finished an introduction to the article, which was a review of an imaginary book of translations from the Esquimaux language, and had written two fragments, which he intended for supposed specimens of Greenland poetry. After another interval of close reading, he again, on the 17th of December, about four o'clock in the afternoon, sat down to the work of composition. He merely wrote with a pencil the following line, suggested perhaps by some topic in the Greenland mythology,

O think not my spirit among you abides,

when he was suddenly struck with the disease which removed his own spirit from its material dwelling....¹

Apparently the edition was well received. It was reviewed in the New England Magazine,² the American Quarterly Review,³ and the Knickerbocker Magazine,⁴ and the "Memoir" was published in the New York Mirror.⁵

Richard Henry Dana, who proves himself a wise critic in his suggestions to Verplanck, wrote to him after reading the Mirror:

I know very little of Sands' writings; but from that little, should judge that his pleasing character in private life had so won upon you, as to lead you insensibly to overrate him as a writer. But of this I ought to speak with diffidence, for I am really too little acquainted with him to make up a decided judgment about it. I hope I am mistaken, for his character interested me very much, & I have seldom met with anything more touching than the account you have given of his death....⁶

To Goodrich's Token for 1835, Verplanck contributed "Bourbon's Last March." His note explains how he came to write the sketch:

¹pp. 25-26.

²VI (1834), p. 332.

³XV (1834), p. 400.

⁴III (1834), p. 161.

⁵XI (1834), p. 249.

⁶Verplanck Papers, Box 3, No. D 10.

My friend Weir was at work upon a very pleasing landscape of a picturesque scene not far from Rome, from a sketch made by himself whilst studying in Italy. It was the town of La Riccia, better known to scholars and antiquaries as the Aricia of Horace, where he made his first resting-place after leaving Rome on his journey to Brundisium....

It occurred to me that the picture would gain much additional interest by the introduction of some historical figures, or a story connected with the scene. The march of the Constable Bourbon to Rome happening to suggest itself to my mind, I recommended that subject to the artist as a suitable accessory to his landscape. He adopted my suggestion and executed it with his usual taste and effect. When, therefore, the picture was to be engraved for the decoration of the annual, I could not refuse the painter's claim in return upon me for a literary illustration of his work.¹

Verplanck was much interested in the theatre and drama, yet so far as I have been able to discover, this is his only composition in dramatic form.

In Part the First we see Charles, Duke of Bourbon, on his march to Rome, determined to conquer the city and take the Pope prisoner. Thus will he be able to satisfy his governing passion for power. In Part the Second, we are taken three years later to a tavern in Rome. There we discover from the conversation of the artists gathered that the plan failed, and that the sculptor Benvenuto Cellini took the credit for having killed Bourbon.

In a note Verplanck gives the sources of the sketch:

I have made little effort at invention, but have aimed at giving as much as I could of the facts, incidents, and even minute details as furnished by the almost contemporary historians, Brantome and the author of the Sacco di Roma, and I have interwoven as many characteristic particulars as the space allowed me would permit. The autobiography of the eccentric and versatile Cellini furnished other materials.... All the characters as well as the incidents are drawn from history.²

"Bourbon's Last March" evidences considerable sense of the dramatic. Verplanck might have written fairly successful

¹I did not have access to this volume of the Token, but "Bourbon's Last March" was published in the New York Mirror XII (October 11, 1834), p. 113, and I used it there.

²Ibid.

drama, had he so desired.

Verplanck wrote an introduction to The Fairy Book, which Harper's copyrighted in 1836. The Fairy Book contains most of the popular fairy stories and some not so familiar which were translated especially for it. The introduction is a delightful essay on fairy tales, sufficiently simple in style for children to read, but yet intended for the adult who had never quite lost his childish wonder or his love for Beauty, Red Riding Hood, and the other figures which lend charm to the fairy tale world. Verplanck signed the introduction with the colorless pseudonym John Smith, and there is nothing to mark it as his own except the general style, the wealth of literary allusions, the references to Newburgh and the Hudson River, and the frequent mention of American artists and poets who were his contemporaries. In closing he said:

"As I make it a rule never to write anonymously, I sign my name at full, as heretofore, to my literary publications.

John Smith"¹

This quaint comment is typical of the whole introduction.

To me it is the warmest, the most charming, the most delightfully human composition which Verplanck wrote. He began by recalling the service to childhood of Mr. Newbery, the English bookseller. For only a sixpence he sold to children excellent little editions of Jack the Giant-Killer, Goody Two-Shoes, Tom Thumb, and other favorites. These little books constituted one of the happiest memories in children's lives, and they taught them much of mercy, charity, love, and courage. Verplanck went on to say:

¹P. xvi.

Washington, when a child, read Newbery's books, and was not only a happier and better boy for them, but a braver and a greater man afterward. If his wise and good mother had not given him these excellent manuals in his childhood, he would never have captured Cornwallis, nor have behaved half as gallantly as he did at Braddock's defeat, nor as nobly as he did afterward at Newburgh. At any rate, I feel quite positive that he would not have been the first and greatest president of the United States, had he never read "Whittington and his Cat."¹

Popular literature of his own age was, he insisted, but the "enlargement and wire-drawing of these good old tales, telling them over and over again under modern names, and dressing them up in modern fashions." He said further:

....I esteem Miss Edgeworth's works highly; still I must confess that they are but the histories of Giles Gingerbread, and Goody Two-Shoes grown up and living among the people of our own days.

Lord Byron, too, owes his whole popularity to the same cause and no other. For throughout all his poems, and his private life to-boot, he was little more than an imitator, and to my mind, only a strutting, mouthing, affected, theatrical, coxcombical imitator, of the noble and more original Blue Beard, that most oriental and ferocious of husbands, that most magnificent and mysterious of murders.²

Benjamin Franklin, High Caine, Samuel London, and Evert Duyckinck had later followed in Newbery's footsteps and furnished the childish mind with fairy tales. With them, however, the editing of fairy tales seemed to end. Said Verplanck:

They are gone - the cheap delight of childhood, the unbought grace of boyhood, the dearest freshest, most unfading recollections of maturer life. They are gone - and in their stead have succeeded a swarm of geological catechisms, entomological primers, and tales of political economy - dismal trash, all of them; something halfway between stupid story-books and bad school books, being so ingeniously written as to be unfit for any useful purpose in school, and too dull for any entertainment out of it.³

One reason urged by some for banning fairy tales was that they were not true and that children should be allowed to read only what was true. Verplanck could not restrain his irritation at

¹p. 11.
²p. 11-111.
³p. v.

such an absurd statement:

I deny the whole argument, every step of it, from the impudent premises to the false and most illegal conclusion. Not true, forsooth, that reverend traditionary lore which hath been handed down from one generation of uncorrupted children to another, from the oldest antiquity of Saxon and Norman literature, untrue! That which the young Shakespeare, and Spenser, and Milton believed in with a warm poetic faith; that to which orators, critics, moralists, and politicians have referred and attested - all falsehood and fiction! Can any body believe it?¹

Then since some people can be convinced only by authority, he gave elaborate quotations from the poetry of George Canning, Prime Minister of England, George Crabbe, and the American editor writing under the name of John Brown to prove that all of them had implicit faith in the truth of the old fairy tales. Verplanck's pseudo-scholarly style in this portion of the essay is delightful. He next explained how the truth of great fiction is always more true than the truth of fact. Another objection raised against fairy tales in America was that there could not be any fairies in this country. In a similar fashion, Verplanck refuted this statement also.

He said that Harper's had seen the need of fairy tales in America; hence The Fairy Book, which they had edited at much expense, taking great care to secure authentic texts. Verplanck made some general comments upon the fairy tales included, saying that he himself had a decided preference for the English ones. His comment on Puss In Boots, I cannot resist quoting in full. It is whimsical, full of literary allusion, a bit humorous; it is indeed Verplanck in his most charming mood:

Having in the course of the preceding remarks more than once pledged my reputation for the truth and morality of these narratives, it behooves me before closing this introduction, to ease my conscience on one single point. By so doing, I trust to show my candour and impartiality, and thus prove my opinions to be worthy of full faith and credit in every other respect.

It is on the subject of Puss in Boots that I am constrained to speak. Whose feelings may be hurt, I care not, for I must speak plainly. Even in my childish years the monstrous and unblushing falsehoods told by this managing, fawning, Grimal-kin, always shocked my moral sensibilities. Since, in maturer life, I have studied the art of criticism, as laid down by Aristotle, Bossu, Blair, and the several quarterly and monthly reviewers at home and abroad, I have become equally convinced that the reward bestowed upon Puss at the end, making him "become a great lord, and never running after rats and mice any more, except for amusements," is against all poetic justice, and contrary to good morals. Let me be distinctly understood in this matter. It is not that I have any weak dislike to cats in general. Shakespeare calls them a harmless necessary race. They are more than that. I love and esteem them. Dogs are faithful, intelligent, affectionate, but they are slaves - kind loving slaves indeed - but not the equal friends of man. The cat acknowledges no master; she enters into equal and honourable friendship with a proud and jealous spirit of independence. I esteem the cat in private life, for her sagacity, her cleanliness, her maternal tenderness, and domestic virtues. Nor is the historical and literary cat without dignity. Whittington's cat was a paragon of virtuous enterprise, like her master. The White Cat was a model of the gentler virtues. Mahomet composed his Koran to the music of his furred favourite's purring. Dr. Johnson would not suffer his venerable Hodge to be slaughtered, but fed him in old age, as faithful chroniclers report, with Colchester oysters. St. Jerome, Robinson Crusoe, and David Hume, all delighted in cats. It is not, therefore, to cats, or to anything that can add lustre to their name, that I object; but to the especial, the abominable, the dangerous example of this individual male cat, called Puss in Boots. The tale could not be omitted, because it was a genuine relic of antiquity; but I have no doubt, in my own mind, that there must originally have been a second part to this narrative, in which the mendacious mouser was soundly punished for his bad habits, in spite of the success that at first seemed to attend him.¹

The views of the Hudson by Thomas Cole which were contributed to the London Picturesque Annual for 1837 were accompanied by letterpress descriptions written by Verplanck.²

Garrick: His Portrait in New York, Its Artist and History,
read before the Sketch Club, January 9, 1857,³ is in the form

¹Pp. xv-xvi.

²Mirror, XIII (1835), p. 135. I have not been able to see the Picturesque Annual for 1837.

³(New York: 1857), p. 3.

of a long letter¹ written to A.M. Cozzens. A hundred copies of it were later printed for private circulation.² The beginning of the letter explains its occasion:

It is more than a twelvemonth ago, that I promised you the history and the evidence of authenticity, both as to subject and artist of your portrait of David Garrick, by Pine. My neglect of this promise has weighed upon my conscience, for I am now one of the very few persons who can give you that history and evidence in full; I therefore take advantage of a prolonged snow storm, which keeps me within doors - against my wont when in the country - to discharge my debt to you, and to ease my own conscience.³

Verplanck was in a loquacious and reminiscent mood when he wrote the letter, and he did not confine himself to a discussion of the history and authenticity of the portrait but wrote also of Garrick and his friends, that whole delightful circle of Dr. Johnson's time, of other actors who played the parts which Garrick made famous, of Pine's life and the portraits he painted in this country, of the circumstances under which his Garrick portrait was painted, of other Garrick portraits, and of the history of the one under discussion. Cozzens had purchased it from the collection of Philip Hone, that delightful diarist who has portrayed in so complete a fashion every facet of New York life during the thirties and the forties. Hone had bought the portrait at the sale of the effects of Joseph Tyler of the Park Theatre after his death, and mention of him started Verplanck upon another train of thought: the parts Tyler played, his wife who had played with Garrick, and the summer sea-bathing hotel which they kept in later years at Rockaway. Here gathered "the elite of the dramatic corps, and much of the fashion and talent of New York."⁴ Then followed memories of the various people whom

¹32 pages long.

²Title-page.

³p. 5.

⁴p. 28.

Verplanck had seen at Rockaway: Charles Wilkes, Mayor Fairlie, and his daughter, Mary Fairlie, afterwards Mrs. Cooper, the elder and the younger Ogden Hoffman, John Wells, James K. Paulding, George Frederick Cooke, James Fennel, Joseph George Holman, and John Wesley Jarvis. And at Rockaway "in the most public room of the house," where all of these might look upon it, was Cozzens' portrait of Garrick by Pine. I might add that it now hangs in the Gallery of the New York Public Library.

The Garrick Letter shows us the old man, one who had been wealthy enough to be a lover and a patron of the arts, who had had all his life the richest experiences which his times afforded, and who had a gift for friendship and for knowing people, in a mood of reminiscence. It is thoroughly delightful, and incidentally, of quite considerable historical value. He said of his grandfather:

I myself own a portrait by Pine, of my grandfather, President Johnson, whom I have before mentioned. This was taken at Philadelphia, during the session of the illustrious convention of the framers of our constitution, of which body he was a prominent member, and had the distinguished honour of finally reporting that instrument complete, for the last action of the convention, as the chairman of the committee of five, to whom it was referred to give it the last revision of form and language. The names of that committee, elected by ballot, by the Convention, sufficiently indicate the importance of the duty they had to perform. They were W.S. Johnson, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Gouverneur Morris, and Rufus King.¹

And in a moment of nostalgia for his lost youth, he exclaimed:

Oh glorious and delicious days of youthful playgoing!
"Visions of glory, spare my aching sight."²

The Century Club regularly celebrated Twelfth Night, and

¹P. 18.

²P. 27.

in 1858 an account of the festival of that year was published.¹ It included a long essay by Verplanck upon the meaning and the history of Twelfth Night. He discussed its observance in different countries, giving detailed descriptions of the customs attendant upon the celebration of the holiday in each. He gave much space to an account of the cooking of the boar's head for the festival of the Century Club. A large part of the essay he devoted to an account of the celebration of Twelfth Night by the Dutch explorer Jacob Van Heemskirk and his men in 1597 when they were caught by winter in Nova Zembla, just fifteen degrees from the North Pole. He felt that the courage displayed by these men who could observe an old festival in the midst of untold privation and suffering augured well for the future. Ten years later Heemskirk, as Vice-Admiral of the United Provinces, gained a famous victory over the Spaniards in the Bay of Gibraltar and thus anticipated Nelson by two hundred years. His men, furthermore, must have been ancestors of those splendid Dutchmen who founded New Amsterdam and gave their ideals fresh meaning in a new world. The point is perhaps far fetched, but it served Verplanck's purpose. How could he write an "occasional piece" without paying tribute to the Dutch!

The essay evidences a great deal of learning and research, and it was one of Verplanck's writings of which he was fondest.²

Verplanck was one of the contributors to Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit,³ a work in nine volumes which consisted largely of letters written to Sprague from persons of whom he had asked information concerning the various clergymen, accounts of

¹Twelfth-Night at the Century Club, January 6, 1858 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1858).

²Charles Henry Hart, "Gulian Crommelin Verplanck," New York Genealogical and Biographical Record (New York: published for the Society, 1870), I, 49.

³(New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1858-1869.)

whom he wished to include in the Annals. In Volume V, which is devoted to Episcopal clergymen, there are letters from Verplanck relating to the life, character, and works of Benjamin Moore,¹ John Bowden,² and William Smith.³ All of them had been friends of Verplanck's grandfather, William Samuel Johnson, through whom he was able to know them more intimately than otherwise might have been possible. Then Moore and Bowden, he had come into contact with when he was at Columbia, Moore being president, and Bowden one of the professors. Verplanck's letter comprises the whole account of William Smith. Verplanck said of him:

I used to see Dr. Smith at my grandfather's, where, like Dominie Sampson, it was his delight, with the choice of several chambers in a large old-fashioned country house, to have a bed made for him in the library, that he might revel from early dawn among the treasure of a library collected in England in the days of folio and quarto learning.⁴

In Volume VI, devoted to Baptist clergymen, is a letter from Verplanck concerning David Henry Barnes.⁵ This letter is taken largely from his The Schoolmaster - Tribute to the Memory of Daniel H. Barnes.⁶ In referring to this earlier address, he said:

....I cannot, after so many years do better justice to his memory than to repeat more briefly the statements then made, whilst the impressions of his character and services were still fresh in all our minds.⁷

These letters in the Annals are of historical rather than literary value. Having known personally the men about whom he wrote, he was able to give information concerning them not easily

¹Pp. 303-304.

²Pp. 306-308.

³Pp. 345-349.

⁴P. 347.

⁵Pp. 624-627.

⁶See above pp. 162-164 (of the complete dissertation).

⁷P. 625.

available so many years after their deaths. He emphasized their personal traits rather than biographical facts, and he made a conscious effort toward just portrayal. The letters are quite free from too fulsome praise.

Letters written by Sprague to Verplanck would indicate that the latter furnished information for the Annals in addition to that herein discussed.¹

In 1867 Frederick S. Cozzens published The Sayings of Dr. Bushwacker and Other Learned Men,² which contained two sketches by Verplanck: "Was Champagne Known to the Ancients?" and "Oxyporian Wines."

Cozzens dedicated the volume to Verplanck, and in his "Preface" he paid him this charming tribute:

I have dedicated this little volume to Mr. Verplanck, not only because of his constant and kindly feelings, always expressed toward the Editor; not only because of the constant and kindly interest he has taken in the literary efforts of all younger American authors; nor yet from mere admiration of his vast acquirements in all fields of knowledge; nor from his extensive lifelong labors for the public welfare, during which patriotism and disinterestedness, far-reaching wisdom and patient modesty, have been his constant companions; nor yet because he is one of the few left of the illustrious literary past; nor yet from the long tradition of his pure and spotless life, as befits the Christian gentleman; nor from any, or all of these, but simply because I felt that some affectionate tribute was due from me to him - my honored and venerable friend.³

The sketches had originally been published in Cozzens' Wine Press⁴ and were revised somewhat for publication in The Sayings of Dr. Bushwacker.⁵ Like a number of Verplanck's other

¹Verplanck Papers, Box 7, Nos. 142-165.

²(New York: A. Simpson & Company, 1867).

³Pp. 3-4.

⁴A monthly periodical which Cozzens edited for seven years before the breaking out of the Civil War - p. 4.

⁵P. 146.

works, they are written in the form of letters, each in answer to a question Cozzens had propounded to Verplanck. In the first Verplanck sets out to prove by elaborate quotations from Greek and Latin authors, which he twisted a bit in translation to suit his purpose, that champagne was known to the ancients. Only one who was a Greek and Latin scholar, who was a connoisseur of fine wines, and who upon occasion had a sense of humor which reveled in the mock heroic could have written it. The letter is Verplanck in one of his sunny moods. It is a slight thing, but witty and clever, a relic of the tastes of the Knickerbocker school.

"Oxyporian Wines" is written in a similar vein. The introduction which Cozzens adds suggests at once the affectations which the Knickerbockers reveled in:

We have received from our esteemed friend, and valued correspondent, whose paper on the champagne of the ancients excited so much surprise and curiosity in literary circles, another article upon kindred topics, which will no doubt prove even more interesting than the former one. Embracing, as it does, a wider range of inquiry, it exhibits more clearly than the other paper, unusual stores of scholarship, at once comprehensive, familiar, and accurate; a vigorous and telling style - in itself a model of good English writing; a curious and technical knowledge of wines in general, beyond that of any modern writer with whom we are familiar, an exact knowledge of chemistry, and a happy vein of humour, as original as it is genuine. It is not surprising that the authorship of the last paper should have been ascribed to several of the most profound scholars of the country. But we can safely predicate of this one that it will excite a still wider range of speculation as to the name of the writer, which for the present, we shall withhold until such time as we are permitted to print it.¹

The letter was written to explain all the meaning and connotation of the word Oxyporian, which Verplanck, in his "Was Champagne Known to the Ancients?" had thus used:

In this statement of the question, you see, I purposely exclude the vin non-mousseux, or what is less philosophically expressed in English by the name of "still Champagne." This I do because in the vulgar and popular use, such wines are not

¹Pp. 186-187.

included under the term Champagne, although grown and made in the District, and some of them, as Sillery, of the very highest merit, gastronomic and dietetic, convivial, social, and moral, and especially in those qualities which the physiology of the table designates as Oxyporian.¹

He explained the word as meaning "that which is of speedy operation and as quick in passing off."² He said that the Athenian dramatist Philyllius explained all the Oxyporian character and effect of certain wines in the following:

Take Thasian, Chian, Mendlian wine,
Lesbian old or new Biblyne,
Differing all, but all divine -

Straight to the brain all swift ascend
Drive out black thoughts, bright fancies lend,
Glad the whole man - then pass away
Nor make the to-morrow mourn its yesterday.³

And Falstaff praised his wine in a similar fashion. After commenting upon the word at considerable length, Verplanck proceeded to answer two questions raised in regard to the thesis of his previous essay. One was by President King of Columbia College, who said that if the Greeks or Romans had champagne, Horace must have had his share, and as Horace never mentioned wine, it could not have been in use in his day. The other was by an unnamed objector who insisted that Homer could not have known champagne. Verplanck was not discomfited but boldly brushed aside both questions. Horace was a melancholy man, a dyspeptic, who abused his tastes by drinking highly intoxicating liquors and never knew the delicate bouquet of really fine wines. He disposed of the other objection in an equally summary manner.

He did not hesitate to take daring liberties with the old classical figures. He said of Horace:

¹Pp. 151-152.

²P. 189.

³Ibid.

He had led a pretty hard, promiscuous sort of a life in his early days of inglorious and disastrous military rank. Afterward he got up in the world, and became the holder of a comfortable office, of more profit than honor; and then, by the favor of his friends in power, became a well-to-do country gentleman. Next we find him suffering the certain penalties of an early debauched and chronically debilitated stomach. He had weak eyes, and a deranged digestion, the first being the natural result of the other malady. He at times resorted to total abstinence and cold water, and became a great critic in good water, in which last particular he showed his usual practical good sense. He was constantly running about, as he tells us, from the plain fare of his Sabine farm to Rome, where he shared the luxurious table of Mecaenas. Thence he galloped off to Baiae, the Newport of that day; then from one mineral spring to another; now dosing himself with chalybeate, now with sulphur water. But all this water regimen is interspersed with frolic and frolic in old Falerian. His love of Falerian flashes the whole truth upon us.¹

Of Ulysees:

When he comes home incog., he learns with indignation the suit of the petty chiefs of Ithaca to his supposed widow, their wasteful depredations upon his goods and chattels, especially his cattle and hogs, and their insults to his only son; but he does not explode in full wrath till he hears of the wasteful abuse of his wines....

It is, therefore, with admirable fitness that the poet makes Ulysses defer the hour of his final vengeance till he sees his palace filled with revelry, and the wine cup crowned with his own best vintages, lifted high and passed around by the insolent invaders of his home and his honor. Then it is, when the loudest and boldest of these revellers lifts to his head a huge two-handled goblet of choice Ithaca Reserve, that he who had long watched these scenes in suppressed wrath, and in the guise and garb of a beggar, now "throws off his patience and his rags together," rises from the mendicant into the monarch, and from his mighty bow showers around winged arrowy vengeance upon the wretches who had essayed to win the affections of his wife, who had plundered his possessions, who had wronged and insulted his darling only son, and who had swilled, without appreciating it, pipe after pipe of his much prized wine, all of it carefully selected, in splendid condition, and most of it more than twenty years old.²

Verplanck did not publish a complete collection of his works during his lifetime, and Bryant thus lamented the fact: "It is to be regretted that he did not collect and publish his literary papers, which would form a very agreeable miscellany. He seemed,

¹Pp. 198-199.

²Pp. 210-213.

however, almost indifferent to literary fame, and when he had once sent forth into the world an essay or treatise, left it to its fate as an affair which was now off his hands."¹ Nor were his collected works published after his death.

¹Op. cit., p. 425.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WILLING SERVANT OF HIS GENERATION

Verplanck was a man of leisure who in the literal sense of the term had no vocation in life, yet few men served their generation with more whole-hearted devotion than he served his. The fact that he was wealthy made it possible for him to devote much time to philanthropic and public enterprises. There was hardly a phase of New York life in which his kindly, constructive influence was not felt: in the church, the school, charity, and the arts. The letters he received are one long succession of requests for favors - from autographs to positions and a college education.

From the time that he was a member of the faculty of the General Theological Seminary, he was actively interested in the affairs of the Episcopal Church in New York. In 1844 he was appointed one of the vestrymen of Trinity Church, New York,¹ and he held this office until his death.² At the time of his death he was one of the two church wardens of Trinity, "a position involving the care and management of the enormous property of that religious corporation."³ He was much interested also in Trinity, the Episcopal Church of Fishkill Village, of which in 1836 he was elected one of the vestrymen and in 1846 warden.⁴ In 1821 he was

¹Rev. William Berrian, History of Trinity Church (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1847), p. 364.

²Charles Patrick Daly in Proceedings of the Century Association in Honor of the Memory of Gullian C. Verplanck (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1870), p. 64.

³Ibid.

⁴Oliver Horatio Ladd, The Founding of the Episcopal Church in Dutchess County (Fishkill: Times Print, 1895), pp. 44, 45.

appointed a trustee of Columbia College, which office he held until 1826, when he resigned,¹ apparently to become one of the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.²

In 1824 he was one of a committee of which Peter A. Jay and Charles King were also members appointed by the High School Society of New York to prepare a "Plan of Instruction to be pursued in the High School," and it is believed that he drafted the report.³ He was afterwards President of the Board of Trustees of the Society, and it was in his President's Annual Report for 1829, that he paid his tribute to Daniel H. Barnes, published in his Discourses and Addresses as "The Schoolmaster."⁴

During the existence of the Public School Society he was one of its trustees - from 1834 to 1841 - and rendered essential service to the cause of public education.⁵

Verplanck became one of the Board of Regents in 1826.

Bryant said of the duties of Regent and of Verplanck's administration of them:

Almost ever since the American Revolution a Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York has existed, on which is laid the duty of visiting and superintending in a general way our institutions of education above the degree of common schools. It consists of twenty-three members, including the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, the Secretary of State, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the other nineteen members are appointed by the Legislature. The Board assists at the incorporation of all colleges and academies, looks into their condition, interposes in certain specified cases, receives reports from them and makes annual reports to the Legislature, and confers by diploma such degrees as are granted by any college or university in Europe. Mr. Verplanck was appointed a member of this board in 1826, in place of Matthew Clarkson, who had been a Regent ever since 1787. In 1855⁶ he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University, and and to the time of his death punctually attended the meetings of the Board, shared in its discussions, and bore his part in

¹General Catalog, p. 20.

²Verplanck Papers, Box 7, No. T 3.

³Hart, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

⁴See above, pp. 162-164 (of the complete dissertation).

⁵Bryant, op. cit., p. 422.

⁶Bryant is wrong as to this date; it should be 1858 - Verplanck Papers, Box 8, No. W 149.

its various duties. In 1844 the State Library was placed under the superintendence of the Regents. Mr. Verplanck was immediately put on the Library Committee, where his knowledge of books and editions of books made his services invaluable. There were then about ten thousand volumes in the collection, and many of these consisted of broken sets. Under the care of the Regents - Mr. Verplanck principally, who gave it his particular attention - it has grown into a well-selected, well-arranged library of more than eighty-two thousand volumes....¹

Every year in August a Convocation was held at Albany to which were invited all the leading teachers and professors of the colleges and academies in the state. There, carefully prepared papers relating to education were read. At one of these meetings Verplanck delivered an address upon the pronunciation of the Latin language, "in which he came to the conclusion that, of all the branches of the Latin race, the Portuguese, in their pronunciation of Latin, make the nearest approach to that of the Romans." The members of the Board asked him to write out the address for publication, but he never did.²

As one of the regents of the state educational system, it was possible for Verplanck to have a great influence upon the education of his state. The large number of letters among his papers relating to educational matters indicate the keenness of his interest in them. All of his best known addresses discuss educational questions in one way or another, and the many letters he had from students, the invitations he received to become honorary member of college literary societies and scholarship fraternities and the great number of college addresses he was asked to deliver give some key to the high regard in which he was held in educational circles. His service to education was recognized to a certain extent in the fact that three colleges conferred upon him

¹Bryant, op. cit., pp. 416-417.

²Ibid., pp. 417-418.

the honorary degree of LL. D.: Ajherst in 1834, and Columbia and also Hobart College in 1835.¹

Verplanck was from 1823 to 1865 one of the governors of the city hospital,² and Bryant said that he remembered "when he made periodical visits to the Insane Hospital at Bloomingdale, as one invested with authority there."³ At the time of his death he was one of the Trustees of the Leake and Watts Orphan House.⁴

In later life his greatest public service was as member and President of the Board of Commissioners of Emigration of New York. Bryant gives the following account of the creation of the commission:

....Shortly before the year 1847 the number of emigrants from Europe arriving in our country had rapidly and surprisingly increased. The famine in Ireland had caused the people of that island to migrate to ours in swarms like those which the populous North poured from her frozen loins to overwhelm the Roman Empire. In the ten years from 1845 to 1854, inclusive, more than a million and a half of Irish emigrants left the United Kingdom. The emigration from Germany had also prodigiously increased, and promised to become still larger. All these were exposed, and the Germans in a particular manner, on account of their ignorance of our language, to the extortions of a knavish class called runners, and of the keepers of boarding-houses, who often defrauded them of all that they possessed, and left them to charity. Most of those who, after these extortions, had the means, made their way into the interior and settled upon farms, but a large number remained to become members of the almshouse, or to starve and sicken in crowded and unwholesome rooms.

These things had become a grievous scandal, and it was clear that something must be done to protect the emigrant from pillage, and the country from the burden of his support. The Act of May, 1847, was therefore passed by the New York Legislature. It named six gentlemen of the very highest character, Gulian C. Verplanck, James Boorman, Jacob Harvey, Robert C. Minturn, William F. Havemeyer, and David C. Colden, who were to form a Board of Commissioners of Emigration, charged with the oversight and care of this vast influx of strangers from the Old World. To these were added the Mayors of New York

¹Cap and Gown, April 28, 1870.

²Biographical Congressional Directory.

³Bryant, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

⁴Funeral Address by Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix - New York Herald, March 22, 1870.

and Brooklyn, and the Presidents of the German Society and the Irish Emigrant Society. Every master of a vessel was, within twenty-four hours after his arrival, to give this Board a list of his passengers, with a report of their origin, age, occupation, condition, health, and other particulars, and either give bonds to save the community from the cost of maintaining them in case they became paupers, or pay for each of them the sum of two dollars and a half. The payment of money has been preferred, and this has put into the hands of the Commissioners a liberal revenue, faithfully applied to the advantage of the emigrants.

Mr. Havemeyer was chosen President of the Board, but resigned the office after a few months, and was succeeded in it by Mr. Verplanck, who held it till the day of his death. Under the management of the Commissioners, the Bureau of Emigration, becoming almost every year more perfectly adapted to its purpose, has grown to vast dimensions, till it is now like one of the departments of government in a great empire.¹

It was under Verplanck's guiding hand that this great work was carried on. On Ward's Island gradually took shape a great cluster of buildings where the poorer class of immigrants were temporarily lodged until they could be sent into the interior or find employment in New York: barracks for the men, a spacious building for the women and children, a nursery for children of a tender age, Catholic and Protestant chapels, a dispensary, workshops, a lunatic asylum, fever wards, surgical wards, storehouses, residences of the physicians and other persons employed in the care of the place, and out-houses and offices of various kinds.² Castle Garden, the old fort at the foot of Manhattan Island, was leased for a special landing-place. Here the immigrant received medical inspection from a competent physician, was registered, given what information he desired, had his luggage taken care of, was assisted in buying railroad tickets, or if he were ill or destitute, was sent to Ward's Island. In other words, he was protected at Castle Garden from all the sharpers who might seek to

¹Bryant, op. cit., pp. 418-421.

²Ibid., p. 420.

³Ibid., pp. 420-421.

capitalize upon his ignorance of the language and the customs of a new land. Nor was the presiding genius of this splendid achievement forgotten, for in 1864, when the new hospital was built, it was called the Verplanck Emigrant Hospital, "in honor of the great philanthropist, for such his constant and noiseless labors in this department of charity entitle him to be called."¹

Verplanck served faithfully upon the commission until his death. Hundreds of letters among the Verplanck Papers regarding emigration matters testify to the unstinted hours of time he devoted to his duties. Medical inspection, the administration of the hospitals, the purchase of supplies, epidemics on the island, the hiring of all persons in the employ of the commission, correspondence with communities desiring to encourage immigration, special problem cases of particular immigrants, and other questions were all matters of his supervision.

In 1858 J.M. Carnochan, surgeon-in-chief of the emigrant hospital at Ward's Island, wrote to Verplanck, asking to dedicate to him his Contributions to Operative Surgery and Surgical Pathology. The simple words of appreciation of this great physician speak much of the high regard in which Verplanck's service was held. He said:

I am desirous of showing, in this way, my appreciation of your deeds as a wise and active friend of humanity; and am persuaded that in doing so, I not merely give expression to the sentiment which animates my own breast, but also to the feeling of your fellow citizens, to whom you are so well known.²

Verplanck served his generation in many ways other than those discussed in the foregoing pages. In 1825 when the New York Mirror offered a prize of fifty dollars "to the author of the best

¹Ibid., p. 420.

²Verplanck Papers, Box 3, No. C 35.

Prose Essay," Verplanck was one of the committee of award along with Cooper, Paulding, Halleck, and Woodworth.¹ Upon the death of Sir Walter Scott, a meeting of the citizens of New York was held, November 19, 1832, to devise some plan for paying proper tribute to Scott's memory.² Verplanck was on a committee appointed to conduct all the correspondence growing out of these proceedings. Some of the other members were Washington Irving, James K. Paulding, William Cullen Bryant, William Leggett, and Charles Fenno Hoffman.³ Verplanck was the prime mover in the loan exhibition held for Dunlap's benefit in November and December, 1838.⁴ He was one of the pall-bearers at the funeral of Lorenzo da Ponte, August 20, 1838.⁵ He acted as Vice-President at the dinner given for Charles Dickens at the City Hotel and delivered one of the toasts.⁶ He was one of the pall-bearers to receive the body of John Quincy Adams when it was brought to New York, March 8, 1848, on its way to Massachusetts.⁷ He was a member of the committee appointed in March, 1852, by an association interested in erecting a colossal statue of James Fenimore Cooper in one of the public squares of New York.⁸ He acted as Vice-President at the Century

¹Nelson Frederick Adkins, Fitz-Greene Halleck, an Early Knickerbocker Wit and Poet (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930, p. 221.

²Mirror, X (December 1, 1832), 175.

³Ibid.

⁴Annie Russell Marble, Heralds of American Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907), p. 271.

⁵Family Magazine, VI (1839), 185.

⁶Evening Post, February 19, 1842.

⁷Philip Hone, The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851 (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1889), II, 346.

⁸James Grant Wilson, The Life and Letters of Fitz-Greene Halleck (New York: D. Appleton and Company), pp. 488-89.

dinner for Halleck, January 18, 1854, and responded to a toast offered by Bryant, the presiding officer, to the Bucktail Bards.¹ In 1865 he was one of a committee of three to award a prize of two hundred dollars for the best paper written by those competing in the Law School of Columbia College.² And there must have been many other similar occasions in which he played a prominent part, but of which no record is easily available.

The Verplanck Papers reveal further his willing devotion to his generation. He examined text books that he might recommend them. He was frequently solicited to permit his name to be used in the prospectus of lectures to be given by some friend or acquaintance. He received almost countless requests for autographs, not only his own but also those of prominent people which he might have in his possession. Apparently all of his friends asked him for letters of reference before they went abroad. He was continually applied to in questions where some legal point was involved. He was always ready to recommend a friend or an acquaintance in whose worth he believed for some position of importance.

He lent assistance to S. Austin Allibone in the latter's preparation of his Dictionary of American Literature.³ He supported the Southern Review in New York,⁴ and he secured for it an article by Professor Griscom.⁵ He assisted William S. Paulding when he was collecting material for the life of his father.⁶ Upon Cooper's request he published a notice in one of the New York papers of the South Carolinian's Lectures on the Elements of

¹Wilson, Halleck, pp. 498-499.

²Verplanck Papers, Box 5, No. L 35.

³Ibid., Box I, Nos. 22-29.

⁴Ibid., Box 4, E 9-11.

⁵Ibid., Box 4, No. E 11.

⁶Ibid., Box 5, No. K 8.

Political Economy.¹ In the early fifties he gave Benson J. Lossing material for his Field Book of the Revolution.² Indeed, he was always ready to help the writers of his generation, and his Papers record many such requests.

Verplanck seems to have been a welcome resource for those interested in literature who came to New York from other sections of the country. Warren R. Davis wrote to him:

Permit me to introduce to your acquaintance Mr. Johnston of South Carolina. He is an intimate acquaintance of your friend Dr. Cooper, and visits the North and East with the view and hope of obtaining as many subscribers to our Southern Review, as we have given to the North American....³

And apparently introducing to Verplanck the same person,⁴ John C. Calhoun wrote, January 6, 1837:

He visits the North with the aim of ascertaining the encouragement it holds out to his favorite pursuit; and I know no one more competent than yourself to give an opinion on all questions connected with the literary merit of your section or to advise Mr. Johnston as to his prospects of success in the particular line for which he has a predilection. Any aid or attention you may extend to him will impose on me a personal obligation.⁵

To him also, H.A. Bullan sent J.D.B. DeBow, the editor of DeBow's Review, when he came to New York.⁶

Verplanck apparently wrote the epitaph for the monument erected in Grace Church to the memory of Cadwallader Colden:

To the Memory of / Cadwallader D. Colden, / For Several Years Mayor of This City, a Senator of This State, / And One of Its Representatives in the Congress of the U.S. / His Talents and Public Services Added a Lustre to These. / And Many Other Honours and Trusts Bestowed upon Him by His Native City. / He Was Alike Eminent for Legal Learning and Eloquence, / For Ardent Love and Pursuit of General Science, / and for

¹Ibid., Box 3, No. C 96.

²Ibid., Box 5, Nos. L 46-49.

³Ibid., Box 3, No. D 56. This letter is not dated.

⁴Calhoun gives his name as Ed. Johnston.

⁵Verplanck Papers, Box 3, No. C 68.

⁶Ibid., Box 1, No. 160.

Useful Application of All His Acquirements / To the Best
Interests of His Country. / As His Philanthropy and Patriotism/
Commanded the Confidence and Attachment of His Fellow-Citizens/
So His Kindness, Frankness and Generosity / Won the Warm Af-
fections of His Family and Numerous Friends, / By One of Whom,
Who Having Witnessed Most Nearly, / Can Best Esteem His Worth,/
This Monument Is Erected.¹

He wrote also the quoted portion of the inscription on the monu-
ment over the grave of Thomas Addis Emmett in the churchyard of
St. Paul's Church:

In America, the Land of Freedom, / He Found a Second
Country, / Which Paid His Love / By Reverencing His Genius, /
Learned in Our Laws, / And in the Laws of Europe, / In the
Literature of Our Times / And in That of Antiquity / All
Knowledge / Seemed Subject to His Use. / An Orator of the
First Order, / Clear, Copious, Fervid, / Alike Powerful / To
Kindle the Imagination, / Touch the Affections, / And Sway
the Reason and the Will. / Simple in His Tastes, / Unassuming
in His Manners, / Frank, Generous, Kind-Hearted, / And Honor-
able, / His Private Life Was Beautiful / As His Public Course
was Brilliant.²

In a similar strain one might continue almost indefinitely,
recounting instances in which Gulian Crommelin Verplanck was the
willing servant of his generation. Each individual instance was
perhaps in itself slight, but the sum total of them all was a
many-sided influence upon his generation, the significance of which
can hardly be realized.

¹Ibid., Box 3, No. C 71. I copied the epitaph from the
stone.

²Thomas Addis Emmett, Memoir of Thomas Emmett.... (New
York: The Emmett Press, 1915), pp. 539-540.

